DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 705 FL 026 677

AUTHOR	Papai, Nicole D.
TITLE	Literacy Development through Content Based Instruction: A Case Study.
PUB DATE	2000-09-00
NOTE	16p.; For the complete collection of working papers, see FL 026 672.
PUB TYPE	Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT	Working Papers in Educational Linguistics; v16 n2 p81-95 Fall 2000
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Case Studies; *English (Second Language); Immigrants; Limited English Speaking; *Literacy Education; Middle School Students; Middle School Teachers; Middle Schools; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Thematic Approach
IDENTIFIERS	*Content Area Teaching

ABSTRACT

English Language Learning (ELL) students in the United States face special challenges for achieving academic success. In addition to the cross-cultural differences that may limit their understanding of the cultural norms and socialization into the larger U.S. discourse community, these students can be hindered by their lower-level English language skills. This case study discusses how one middle school teacher in a pull-out English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classroom used content-based instruction to teach English as well as develop the multidimensional nature of literacy. His practice uses thematic units, technology and standardized achievement test preparation as a means of increasing English language skills, technical skills, and academic competencies to facilitate socialization in American discourse practices. Further, the discussion examines how the teacher rejects the idea of lower-level literacy capabilities of ELL students as part of his efforts to provide them with access to academic success in the U.S. It is concluded that content-based instruction expands the students' conceptual knowledge base while teaching language through meaningful activities. (Contains 23 references.) (KFT)

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Literacy Development through Content Based Instruction: A Case Study

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Nicole D. Papai

University of Pennsylvania

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English Language Learning (ELL) students in the United States face special challenges for achieving academic success. In addition to the cross-cultural differences which may limit their understanding of the cultural norms and socialization into the larger US discourse community, these students can be hindered by their lower-level English language skills. This case study will discuss how one middle school teacher in a pull-out ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) classroom uses content based instruction to teach English as well as to develop the multidimensional nature of literacy. His practice utilizes thematic units, technology and standardized achievement test preparation as means of increasing English language skills, technical skills and academic competencies to facilitate socialization into US discourse practices. Further, the discussion will include how the teacher rejects the idea of lower-level literacy capabilities of ELL students as part of his efforts to provide them access to academic success in the US.

English Language Learning (ELL) students in the United States face special challenges for achieving academic success. In addition to the cross-cultural differences which may limit their understanding of the cultural norms and socialization into the larger US discourse community, these students can be hindered by their lower-level English language skills. To facilitate their participation in and understanding of US society and development of English language abilities, they need to become proficient in all four language skill areas[1]. In order to at least have access and succeed in the United States' public school system and perhaps beyond, these students need to be able to read, write and understand academic texts as well as other varied genres from the major subject areas: novels, plays, poems, science lab reports, and math word problems. Additionally they need to be able to discuss and understand discussions within these content areas. Besides developing the four language skill areas, the students need to go one step further and learn the language and

[1]The four language skill areas refer to reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

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norms that are used specifically in these subjects. In other words they need to gain communicative competence in the content areas by having an understanding of not only the words used, but also the style of presentation in texts (written and spoken). This paper will discuss how one instructor uses content based ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) instruction to develop the multidimensional nature of literacy: language skills, technical skills, and academic competencies to abet socialization into US discourse practices. Further, the discussion will include how the teacher rejects the idea of lower-level literacy capabilities of the students, as part of his efforts to provide them access to academic success in the US. Before turning to the specifics of this discussion, it is necessary and useful (for the purposes of context and texture) to consider the relevant theoretical perspectives as well as to describe the setting in which the research took place.

Relevant Theoretical Perspectives

Though there is a tremendous amount of research related to literacy development in an individual's first language, less has been published as it relates to second language literacy development. The available research suggests that the development of reading and writing skills are similar for native English speakers and for ESL learners (Goodman & Goodman 1978:25). In both reading and writing, learners use their nascent English language abilities, "their world knowledge, and their understanding of print conventions" to understand and create written texts (Peregoy & Boyle 1997:32). As literacy is developing, both native English speakers and English as Second Language (ESL) learners need to learn the alphabet, how the letters form words, sentences, and paragraphs, which then are organized into stories, essays, and reports. (Goldman & Trueba 1987:112).

In addition to the traditional idea of literacy as the ability to read and write, literacy has a social dimension (Gee 1994:169; McKay 1996:427; and Street 1984:2). McKay (1996:428) claims that "successful literate behavior entails the ability not only to decode written symbols, but also to interpret these symbols against a backdrop of social convention." This is supported by Street's (1984:1) ideological model which assumes that the meaning of literacy depends upon the social institutions in which it is embedded. Furthermore, Gee (1994:170) claims that literacy has no meaning "apart from the particular cultural contexts in which it is used." Since school is a cultural institution, academic literacy facilitates the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs of the specific discourse community in which it is rooted (Gee 1994:169). Gee (1994:185) writes:

> "Members of a community use print to take meaning from the environment. How they use the knowledge gained from print are interdependent with the ways that they are socialized in interaction with peers. Becoming literate en-

> tails social interaction with those who know how to use a text to serve a particular social purpose.

These statements suggest that becoming literate in a US public school entails not only becoming literate in English, but in US cultural norms and values. An ESL teacher then, is not only teaching oral and written English, but is also teaching the discourse practices associated with the "standard dialect" of English (Gee 1994:189). Very often language minority students are at a disadvantage and are marginalized because of their cross-cultural differences in literacy practices (including the cultural norms of their particular discourse community) (Heath 1983, cited in Gee 1994:185). Teachers may see these differences as a lack of cognitive capabilities and have lowered expectations which in turn lead to stereotyping and perpetuating a cycle of subordinated roles for the language minority students.

Though there are many similar aspects in the acquisition of literacy skills across first and second languages, there are differences. One significant difference is the student's ability to read and write in his or her first language (Peregoy and Boyle 1997:13). Research suggests that strong first language literacy and education are significant factors in second language and literacy acquisition (Cummins 1981:12). Further, Cummins (1981:37) and others (Auerbach 1996:20; Edelsky 1986:14; and Williams & Snipper 1990:5) believe that literacy skills can be transferred from the native language and applied to the second language as second language literacy develops. This argument would suggest that the stronger the literacy skills that the students bring with them from the first language, the more transferable skills they will have to aid in the development of their literacy skills in English.

Krashen (1982:61) suggests that a second language can be acquired more successfully when the focus of instruction is on the meaning rather than only on the linguistic forms of the target language. Further, Doughty and Varela (1998:137) have argued that acquisition of language skills can be maximized when there is a focus specifically on linguistic forms when integrated within meaningful activities. This supports the idea that ESL students will be most successful when there is a meaningful use of the language such as through academic content, with attention to language forms (Crandall 1994:3). This is the definition of content based language instruction. The integration of language and content offers a means through which ESL students can continue their cognitive development while they are developing academic language proficiency in English (Grabe and Stoller, 1997:19).

Context

This research was carried at a middle school in Northeast Philadelphia over a four-month period. The community surrounding the school is multiethnic. At the time of the research, this fact was obvious when driving

through the neighborhood and was confirmed by demographic information. Though many ethnicities were and still are represented in this school, the largest ethnic group in both the school and community was Latinos (45.9%). This community has been characterized by school personnel as a "working poor" neighborhood with 86% of the children coming from low income families.

The class observed was a pull-out, multi-grade, ESOL class with only six students. The students' enrollment in this class is compulsory. The school district identified them as English Language Learners indicating their need for English language support and instruction to meet their academic requirements. The students in the class were at the intermediate level of English proficiency. The following chart provides information about the students' grade-level, gender, nationality, and length of residence in the US at the time of the study.

Student	Grade	Gender	Native Country	Length of Residence
Jane	7th	female	Ghana	2.5 years
Duoc	7th	male	Cambodia	4 years
Angela	8th	female	Colombia	1.5 years
Elizabeth	8th	female	Dominican Republic	2.5 years
José	8th	male	Puerto Rico *	2.5 years
Miguel	8th	male	Dominican Republic **	2.5 years

*José was born in the United States to a family where one parent is Puerto Rican and the other is Colombian. When José was three years old the family moved to Puerto Rico for eight years.

**Miguel moved to New York City before Philadelphia. He was in a bilingual program in NY for two grades, 6th and 7th.

The students in the class had had fairly stable educational backgrounds. All of them attended school in their native countries up until the time that they departed for the United States. Furthermore, according to the children, all of their parents are literate in their first language. A few of them also speak, read, and write in English. Both of these factors are very powerful influences within the contextual situations of the students, especially when considering their potential for academic success in the United States (McKay 1996:440). The students shared with me that in their native countries, all of which are developing nations, each of them had limited experience learning English. In all cases, the students' English language education consisted of learning and drilling vocabulary words.

As I mentioned above, this ESOL class was "pull-out" meaning that the students attended their content area classes with native English speakers. They were segregated from the native speaking students in order to get focused English language training. Since the content area classes are instructed by native speakers and are intended for native speakers, the ESOL students receive a great deal of English language input. Moreover, I observed opportunities to negotiate meaning in these classes as the students interacted with the teachers and the other students in multiple cooperative learning activi-

ties. The students seemed to understand most of the English spoken to them and were able to speak informal English proficiently. The language of instruction in the ESOL classroom was English and for the most part the students spoke English to each other. The only deviation from this was that when the Latino students were working together or chatting informally in the classroom, they would begin speaking in English beforeultimately switch to Spanish.

The students described their educational experiences in their home countries as traditional, teacher-centered classrooms. Throughout this middle school, the teachers strive to make learning more student-centered and there is an emphasis on cooperative learning groups and projects. This focus is possibly correlated with one of the interesting classroom dynamics I observed in the ESOL class. The students were extremely supportive of each other and were genuinely considerate of each other's feelings. They encouraged each other and for the most part, worked together without conflicts, even offering and accepting constructive criticism in a non-threatening way. This supportive atmosphere was a resource that I observed the teacher of the class, Mr. Grimaldi[2], fostering and building upon to increase the English language learning experience of these students.

Grimaldi's education and experiences have facilitated the development of his ESOL practice. As a child of immigrants he was raised in a bilingual household with parents struggling to learn the language and the cultural norms of their adoptive country. Grimaldi went on to study English and Spanish as an undergraduate and then earned a Master's degree in bilingual and bicultural education with a focus in ESL. Further, he has been teaching content based ESOL for fifteen years and has been teaching at this school for four years. Clearly these experiences have shaped Grimaldi's perspective regarding ELL student capabilities and literacy development as well as his own teaching practice. A major undercurrent throughout the discussion section of this paper is how Grimaldi's practice is a reflection of his perspective.

Method

The information presented in this paper was gathered through a variety of means. Participant observation was the main source of data collection as I tutored in the class twice weekly over four months. Student writing samples and instructional materials were reviewed and collected. Furthermore, the students and the classroom teacher were interviewed formally and more informally through casual conversation. The teacher was aware of and interested in facilitating my research. The research was explained to the students at the beginning of the semester, but they ultimately came to view my role as one of support to the instructional goals in the class. Because of the small class size, it was relatively easy to get to know all of the students quickly and comfortably fit into the rhythm of the class.

[2]All names of research participants in this paper have been changed to protect identities.

Discussion

Mr. Grimaldi once told me that he thinks of literacy as, "a multifaceted range of skills...reading and writing skills, academic skills and generally learning about the world" (informal interview, March 18, 1999)[3]. His commitment to that definition was demonstrated through his instructional goals and teaching practice. The following discussion will provide a description of how Mr. Grimaldi develops academic literacy (which includes but is not limited to reading and writing skills). Throughout this discussion, the reader will gain insight and understanding of Grimaldi's definition of literacy. This definition demonstrates his belief that it incorporates and integrates language skills, content knowledge, as well as developing critical thinking skills and a sense of agency. Grimaldi's vehicle for developing literacy in his ELL students is a form of content based ESOL instruction. Content based language instruction, as discussed earlier, is an effort to integrate language instruction with academic content, where the target language is used as the medium of instruction for academic subject areas such as math, science and social studies (Crandall 1994:3). Though there are many models of content based instruction[4], Grimaldi uses thematic units to reinforce content area knowledge in the major subject areas focusing on English language competencies in each of the four language skill areas.

Grimaldi provides each student with a checklist of general goals under each of the four language skill areas to be reached during the thematic unit. Under each goal there are a variety of generalized assignments (e.g., oral presentation, book report, model, group project) that the student can do to demonstrate over the course of the unit that they have reached the goal of using the content learned in the unit. From the very beginning of each unit, the objectives of the unit are explained to the students so that they have a clear understanding of the expectations (Turner, 1997:190).

In reference to his own expectations for student achievement, Grimaldi's has what many would perceive as a luxury, a small class that allows him to become familiar with each student's education and literacy backgrounds. Peregoy and Boyle (1997:4) and McKay (1996:440) stress the importance of teacher's awareness of the literacy knowledge that students bring with them from prior schooling and how reading and writing are used in their homes and communities. As was previously mentioned, each of the students had fairly consistent and stable educational experiences. Grimaldi claims that he recognizes these factors as strengths and tries to build on and expand the skills that the students already have to develop the literacy required by US schools and society (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997:12).

Drawing on and Utilizing Background Knowledge

Though he has a general idea of the activities within each of his thematic

[3] He is quoted throughout the paper with his permission.
[4] See Crandall (1994) for a discussion of the different models of content based instruction.

units, Grimaldi begins each with a chart asking "What I Know" and "What I Learned" (this question is for the end of the unit). This chart is commonly referred to as the KWL chart. Grimaldi uses it as a guide for his future lessons by discovering what the students already know, and what they would like to learn. In the unit on Harriet Tubman, the students generated a list of questions of things they wanted to know about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. Grimaldi compiled these questions on a sheet, and then provided the students with various forms of print and electronic media. The students selected questions and looked for the answers. Once they found an answer, they wrote the question and the answer on an index card. As a writing exercise about historical events, Grimaldi used the opportunity to do a lesson on the past tense. The students created a verb chart that was hung in the room showing several present tense verbs with their past tense counterparts. The students could refer to this throughout this exercise and beyond.

After all of the Harriet Tubman questions had been answered, Grimaldi compiled the information they discovered into a "reference sheet" that he provided to each one of the students. Over the course of the unit, as the students learned more about the topic, they could refer to their reference sheet as supplementary information. Further, the reference sheet provided the students with additional background knowledge; as they learned more information over the course of the unit, they could make connections with the facts on the sheet (Peregoy & Boyle 1997:238).

Reading and Writing

A significant component of each thematic unit in this class is reading. Reading is used as a basis for all of the other activities. The students read short novels, plays, scholastic magazines, and written pieces on the Internet. Additionally, so that they can increase their awareness of the world outside of their community, they are required to read newspaper articles[5]. Through reading activities, the students are developing their reading skills, increasing their vocabulary, and expanding their content-area knowledge (Grabe & Stoller 1997:9). Grimaldi helps develop the students' reading comprehension abilities by providing structured lessons on how to find the main idea, how to take notes by asking themselves the "wh-" questions[6], and summarizing what they have read. Through these lessons, the students break the text down into its smaller component chunks, noticing the features of each item (Heath 1983, cited in Gee 1994:188). They practice this skill repeatedly, eventually taking meaning from the print (Heath 1983, cited in Gee 1994:188; Irwin & Doyle 1992:72; and Peregoy & Boyle 1997:305). Reading also provides some of the meaningful input for the language forms on which Grimaldi would like to focus to maximize their acquisition (Doughty & Varela 1997:152).

[5] Grimaldi tries to relate current events to his thematic units. Sometimes, the theme may not be related, but the new language form will be utilized in the article to provide another meaningful context for the language form in use.

[6] who, what, where, when, why, and how

Furthermore, as is suggested through research, by developing their reading skills, the students are also improving their writing skills (Grabe & Stoller 1997:9; Irwin & Doyle 1992:15; and Peregoy & Boyle 1997:284).

Grimaldi requires the students to do several writing assignments throughout each thematic unit. He teaches them the components of specific genres and they practice them by writing book reports, longer compositions and reflection pieces.Through these assignments the students are practicing their writing skills, demonstrating the subject-area knowledge they have gained throughout the unit, and employing the language of the content areas as well as the linguistic forms that they have been learning. Furthermore, they are also practicing the communication style (language use and presentation) used in the specific subject areas. The ongoing integration of reading and writing, focusing on both content information and form, helps the student to internalize the means by which one constructs and demonstrates knowledge in English and in a US academic setting.

Vocabulary Development

Since these students are proficient speakers of informal English and are developing English reading and writing skills, it was crucial to help them build their vocabulary, especially as it related to their subject areas. Grimaldi provides experiential lessons within his thematic units through demonstrations and field trips so that connections between the terminology of the experience and the concepts in the subject area can be made. As he builds the students' knowledge of topics, he is also building the vocabulary at their disposal to read and write about them (Peregoy and Boyle 1997:301-302; and Raimes 1983:53). Rather than providing a decontextualized list of vocabulary words, this method proposes to use what Peregoy and Boyle (1997:169) call "language in use": experiencing the topic directly, building a schema for it, and ultimately learning content language in context. The students' understanding of a concept and the language to describe it develops through their repeated exposure to it in varied contexts. Furthermore, as they begin to internalize the meanings of words and concepts, the students may apply them in different contexts. For example, after learning about the dangers of panicking in the thematic unit on the Titanic, when asked what a good test taking strategy would be in a later unit, one student suggested, "Don't panic!"

Use of Technology

An example of literacy transcending reading and writing abilities and applying to all of the skills necessary to succeed in a discipline, is the development of technological skills (Rafferty 1999:22). Grimaldi is an advocate of using technology in the classroom, and interweaves its use throughout activities. He sees technological abilities as useful in academic settings to support instruction and in the larger society as we become more reliant on technology worldwide. Furthermore, as Elkins and Luke (1999:213) point out, being able to use and manipulate a variety of texts -including multimedia- is

taking the place of hands-on production globally. Considering the popularity with adolescents of "surfing the Web", use of the Internet and other technology in the classroom will help foster the literacy practices that engage adolescents and prepare them to be "citizens of the new millennium" (Elkins and Luke 1999:213).

The ESOL classroom was well-equipped with two desktop computers with Internet access and six laptop computers. When I asked the students why they use the Internet, they explained, "To do research." I was impressed that they had such a firm grasp on the benefits of and skills needed for using the Internet to support their schoolwork. They all seem very comfortable in performing searches on the World Wide Web, and understanding how to download information for their use.

The primary use for technology in this class, as stated above, was for research[7]. The students were trained in how to use Internet search engines to learn more information about the topic of the current thematic unit. The search engines are geared toward learners of different ages and different levels, are interactive and are also aesthetically pleasing. The students were sometimes asked to use the information they gain from these searches to make brief oral presentations to the class. Grimaldi supported these presentations by making or adding to graphic organizers (or having the students do so) of the general themes or new areas brought out by the students' research presentations. Furthermore, this was an opportunity for them to practice their oral language skills and discuss any new vocabulary. This activity was a means of helping the students to internalize the material, share it with their classmates, practice language skills and add to their content area knowledge.

Another example of technology use in the classroom is for interactive spelling tests. The computer said a word, and showed it being used in a sentence. The screen was cleared, and the student was asked to type the word correctly. The students enjoyed this non-traditional means for practicing their spelling and their keyboard skills. Moreover, the use of this type of program gave the students the chance to make visual connections from aural cues (Goldman & Trueba 1987:110).

A third use of technology in this classroom was to write in an on-line reflective journal. Grimaldi provided the students with a thought-provoking prompt related to a specific topic within their thematic unit, and the students wrote about it. The prompt was often something that had not yet been discussed within the unit, so the students were able to demonstrate application of their conceptual knowledge and language skills in a different forum and a different genre.

Standardized Achievement Test Preparation

Grimaldi stressed the importance of maintaining high expectations for

[7] Grimaldi allows the students to use the Internet to do research for their content area classes as well. They take advantage of this opportunity.

his students. As he states,

> "The students already know that they are different than their mainstream classmates. If we are to help them to achieve academic success, it is important to make them believe that they *can* achieve academic success in the United States, even as members of non-mainstream, non-native speaking groups" (emphasis added) (informal interview, April 27, 1999).

One way that Grimaldi demonstrated his commitment to high expectations is through his structured and rigorous preparation for the standardized achievement testing (an ad hoc thematic unit) to which all students in their grade level are subject. Grimaldi has communicated that he has heard administrators suggest that even though the ESOL students "won't do well on the tests," they will still need to take them (informal interview, March 25, 1999). He does not believe that because students are ELL and are unfamiliar with the tests, their content, or their format, that they do not have the opportunity to do well or should not be just as prepared as the mainstream students. He systematically provided the students with questions similar to the types that appear on these tests to familiarize them with the style and content. Furthermore, Grimaldi studied the sample tests to determine the common language utilized and used this language as the basis for lessons focusing on specific linguistic forms. They became accustomed to seeing the language within the test questions and were able to understand and use it to successfully respond to the questions. Moreover, Grimaldi utilized the content within sample tests to formulate activities. For example, he would provide a visual (and often manipulable) model of the math word problems. This served a dual purpose of helping the students gain a better understanding of the math concepts required for the particular problem as well as to hear (and see) the language of the problem in use. Each of the students was asked to prepare a visual presentation of one of the math or science problems as they understood them. Through this activity, the students needed to understand what they had read from both language and content perspectives and then be able to explain it to the teacher and their classmates, requiring critical understanding of the subject matter and functional use of the language (Crandall 1994:3).

Grimaldi recognizes the standardized achievement tests as part of the US academic tradition on which his students will need to do well to achieve in school, and he prepares them for this reality. Following the first round of tests that were given during my research, the students reflected on how they felt about their performance and the test in general. Additionally, Grimaldi asked his students to think about what strategies were helpful, which were not, and what they would do differently next time. The conversation was

more candid and critical than I expected[5]. The students were very comfortable sharing the difficulties they had and the level of stress that accompanied taking this test. One student said, "I felt in a hurry, like the teacher was going to say, 'The time is over, put your pencil down.'" The other students immediately chimed in with agreement of this expression of anxiety. Grimaldi shared his own memories of the nervousness involved with taking exams to add to the universality of the experience (Peregoy & Boyle 1997:78). Through this activity, the students were able to reflect on what they had learned in the test-taking strategy unit, and how they were able to apply the knowledge.

The opportunities for reflection in discussion and in writing are useful for many reasons. They provide opportunities to negotiate meaning, practicing the four language skill areas. Furthermore, the students have the chance to think critically about their understanding of the projects and the difficulties they encountered (Peregoy & Boyle 1997:314). They can apply the lessons learned to their future schoolwork. Each of these skills are beneficial for academic achievement in all content areas at all levels.

Developing a Sense of Agency

Grimaldi is aware that one of the keys to gaining access within the US school system is developing confidence in your academic abilities. As a follow-up activity to the reflection on test-taking, Grimaldi asked his students to create posters, using desktop publishing software, of the test taking tips they found most useful, to be hung throughout the school. Not only was this an authentic assignment that validated the students' work by making it public, it also positioned the ESOL students as experts (Brown 1994:330; Edelsky 1986:6; and Peregoy & Boyle 1997:198). Similarly, during the unit on the Titanic, Grimaldi's students each created an "artifact" of their choice (a game, a model, a computer slide show) demonstrating what they had learned throughout the unit. This was an assessment that allowed the students alternative ways to show what they had learned. These artifacts were put on display in the classroom and other (mainstream) classes and teachers were invited to come and peruse the "museum". The ESOL students were the guides, and were available to explain any questions the "patrons" might have about their artifacts or the Titanic disaster. For the museum, the students created a video of a newscast as if the disaster were happening today. Each student in the class had an integral role in making the video, without which some important aspect would have been missing. When the first takes were reviewed, they noticed that there was a problem with the lighting causing one of the newscasters to be covered with shadows. The students sat together as a group (facilitated by Grimaldi) to figure out how this problem could be solved, each suggesting different things to try. After, they tried the

[5] Grimaldi claims that it was typical of their reflection discussions and is probably a result of the comfort level established in the class, and their experience doing this kind of reflection.

ideas that they came up with to see what worked best. Through these assignments, Grimaldi is helping to empower his students by providing them with opportunities to be experts and problem solvers, to share their knowledge with each other and outsiders to their class.

Grimaldi's high expectations can be seen in his belief that many of his students are candidates for post-secondary education. Each year, one of his thematic units revolves around learning about college. Within this unit, Grimaldi discusses college attendance with them and takes annual field trips to local universities. He has stated, "There are a lot of messages that our kids get from within the community and from without, telling them that college is not a realistic option" (personal communication, April 27, 1999). Though he knows that every student (ELL or otherwise) is not necessarily going to go to college for a variety of reasons, Grimaldi believes that this experience gives them "the feel of a US college campus, and the knowledge that it *is possible*" (emphasis added) (informal interview, May 20, 1999). In other words, he wants to raise their awareness to opportunities and experiences beyond their immediate setting.

The discussion above shows the reader how Grimaldi communicates to his students that they have the abilities to be as successful as mainstream students in the US, despite implicit and explicit messages they receive to the contrary. He rejects the marginalization of language minority students by helping them develop the agency and skills needed to achieve academic success. Gee (1994:190) reminds us that ESL teachers are "gatekeepers", and without control over the discourse practices in "thought, speech, and writing of essay-text literacy and its attendant world-view", there is not access to power in society. Grimaldi's practice demonstrates his awareness of this fact. Recognizing that school conveys the culture in which it is embedded, Grimaldi helps his students reflect on and understand the rhetorical styles, technical skills, and cultural norms in the US.

The students in Mr. Grimaldi's class developed literacy abilities that extend beyond reading and writing in English to include a wider array of academic competencies. As a demonstration of their success and perhaps socialization into some of the US discourse practices, the students' grades in all of their content areas consistently increased over the course of the school year from mostly C's and D's to B's, C's and even A's in certain subjects. The development of their language abilities, content knowledge, reflective questioning, technical skills and general awareness of the world around them can be summed up in the following example. On my last day in his classroom, one of the students asked if she could stay during lunch. Grimaldi said she could, but asked why. She responded, "I want to look on the Internet to see what's going on in Kosovo."

Collaboration with Content Teachers

Though Mr. Grimaldi's class was successful on many levels, there were some areas that could be improved. The most serious of these was the lack of

collaboration with the subject area teachers. His students all came from different mainstream homerooms, resulting in approximately 20 different subject area teachers with whom Grimaldi needed to interact. Logistically it was impossible for them to have the time or the flexibility to collaborate on lessons or on student progress. Grimaldi recognized the necessity for collaboration so that his lessons could support the instructional goals of the mainstream content classes (Short 1997:231). Furthermore, collaboration would allow the subject area teachers to express some of the language difficulties the ESOL students have in their classes. Without this type of collaboration, Grimaldi could be repeating content already covered, or missing language areas that need more focused attention (Short 1997:231). At the time, he was fortunate to have a supportive administration that was willing to make structural changes to the current set-up to allow for the opportunity to collaborate.

Conclusion

Through the above discussion and vignettes the reader sees one teacher's systematic and integrated approach to literacy development through content based instruction. The use of content based instruction expands the students' conceptual knowledge base while teaching language through meaningful activities. Grimaldi provides his students with multiple literacy building activities including traditional forms of print covering a variety of subjects, technological skills and electronic media, experiential learning and opportunities for reflection which all support and enhance their learning in and out of the classroom. These are all non-static aspects of learning which interact and overlap to make a dynamic context through which the students become more literate on many levels (Edelsky 1986:158). Grimaldi's practice represents an interweaving of defining literacy as the ability to read and write in a language as well as the capability to be communicatively competent in a multiplicity of subject areas (Crandall 1994:4). In other words, this teacher facilitates his students' use of the target language to "apply this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use" (Scribner & Cole 1973, cited in Gee 1994:178). Moreover, Mr. Grimaldi's literacy development practices demonstrate an effort to promote socialization into, and access to US cultural norms and discourse practices (Gee 1994:169). By presenting this example, my hope is to provide a persuasive argument for the benefits of content based language instruction as an effective means for achieving the multidimensional learning of literacy in a second language.

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Nicole D. Papai recently received her Master's of Science in Education from the University of Pennsylvania. Her major was TESOL. She currently is the head of the foreign language department at a charter school in Philadelphia, PA.